

# MITIGATING COVID-19 HARM IS OUR FOCUS

By LARRY BROWN and APRIL SIMS

The COVID-19 outbreak poses a serious threat to working people, and mitigating the harm this crisis is causing in Washington state will be a central focus of the 2021 session, or any special session later this year. While the extent of the impact on our healthcare facilities, as well as the damage to our economy, is not yet known, it is already clear that working people are shouldering the brunt of the harm. Facing unprecedented unemployment and some corporations that

are emboldened to exploit this crisis, the WSLC is committed to ensuring the voice of working people is heard in Washington’s economic response. Before the end of the 2020 session on March 12, legislators appropriated \$200 million, primarily from state reserves, in emergency funding to support Washington’s COVID-19 outbreak response and frontline workers. An additional \$25 million went to bolster the Employment Security Department as unemployment insurance filings have skyrocketed amid mass layoffs and furloughs associated with the coronavirus.

The WSLC is pushing to ensure that working people are made whole during this crisis, working with government and community partners to address the needs of frontline workers, folks losing employment, and workers in unsafe workplaces. We’ve helped guide changes to the state unemployment system and safety net to cover as many Washingtonians as possible, and we’ve secured funding from community partners to provide stipends to workers in need during this crisis via the Foundation for Working Families.

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# Labor scores some wins

Rail, airport, building trades workers all gain protections; but opportunities also missed

By JOE KENDO

The 2020 legislative session ended with a level of uncertainty not experienced by most in their working – if not living – memory. Unlike previous years’ *sine die*, there was little celebration when the session ended March 12. At the time, there were fewer than 500 known COVID-19 infections and 31 deaths. Gov. Jay Inslee had just prohibited large gatherings. Despite the pall that fell over our state in the waning weeks of the session, Washington’s labor community accomplished quite a bit, though much was left on the table.

**SESSION OVERVIEW**

## Safe staffing for trains

Our rail labor workers represented by SMART/UTU and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (IBT) secured the passage of HB 1841 to require two-person crews on most freight and passenger trains, and authorizing the Utilities and Transportation Commission to regulate safety standards for these lines. This effort led by Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D-Spokane) and Sen. Patty Kuderer (D-Bellevue) capped a seven-year struggle by these workers to secure safe staffing levels for an industry where employee fatigue and minor human error can lead to catastrophic derailments. While surely a win for the men and women who work on and around trains, this is also an important milestone for public safety in communities through which thousands of miles of rail run, from Spokane to Everett, and Vancouver to Bellingham.

## Airport labor standards

Airport workers represented by UNITE HERE Local 8 achieved a big

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WSLC Secretary Treasurer April Sims addresses the Rally for Safety & Privacy on the State Capitol steps on Feb. 6 amid the WSLC Legislative Lobbying Conference.

# Public employees demand and win HB 1888 to protect privacy, safety

One of labor’s biggest legislative victories of the 2020 session was a high-profile battle to protect the privacy and safety of public employees. The state Public Records Act explicitly exempts certain personal information about public employees from disclosure, such as home addresses and phone numbers and Social Security numbers. But that privacy was put at risk by a narrow (5-4) State Supreme Court ruling in 2019 that public employees’ birth dates

weren’t specifically exempted and were therefore subject to disclosure. As any online security expert will tell you, having a name and birth date makes it easy to find a home address and poses a significant threat to privacy and safety. HB 1888, sponsored by Rep. Zack Hudgins (D-Tukwila), set out to update the Public Records Act to exempt public employees’ birth dates from disclosure. Its passage was a priority for the WSLC.

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# WSLC proudly backs racial equity bills, opportunities for all

When I campaigned for the honor of serving as President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, I emphasized the importance of maintaining and advancing the WSLC’s groundbreaking racial equity work. As we continue to educate our state’s union leaders and rank-and-file members about the inextricable link between race and labor struggles, we are making our movement stronger. In addition to these educational efforts, it’s important for organized labor to support public policy changes that promote racial equity. That’s why the WSLC was proud to support the following important bills all championed by women of color in the State Legislature. All of the following bills were approved in 2020 and signed into law by Gov. Jay Inslee:



**PRESIDENT’S COLUMN**  
**Larry Brown**

■ Rep. Mia Gregerson (D-SeaTac) sponsored HB 1783 to establish the new Washington State Office of Equity. It will promote access to equitable opportunities and resources that reduce disparities and improve outcomes statewide across all sectors of government. Unfortunately, the funding for HB 1783 was among the COVID-19 casualties when Gov. Jay Inslee vetoed almost all new spending in the budget. The WSLC will fight to restore this funding when state revenues recover from the coronavirus costs and the resulting economic slowdown. ■ Sen. Rebecca Saldaña (D-Seattle) sponsored SB 5165 to prohibit discrimination based on immigration or citizenship status in our state. It does not supersede federal law, but allows the state to maximize protections against discrimination.

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# Progress on labor-climate policies, but more needed

By VLAD GUTMAN-BRITTEN

In the wake of a 2019 session where environmental and labor stakeholders came together to advance the most ambitious climate agenda in state history, the 2020 session was a decidedly more staid affair. In partnership, however, we achieved some notable wins, with much work remaining for future sessions:

■ **ZEV Mandate** — Sponsored by Sen. Joe Nguyen (D-West Seattle), SB 5811 requires automakers to sell a certain share of their fleet as electric or other Zero Emission Vehicles. The result will be that automakers will provide more models for sale in Washington and must price them competitively. Washington is the 11th state to adopt the program, with several more considering joining as well. An expanded electric vehicle fleet will mean less spending on transportation, since electricity is much more affordable than gasoline, improved air quality, and a greater investment in charging infrastructure in every corner of the state.

■ **Pipeline Leakage** — While gas utilities are required to repair hazardous pipeline defects that pose a public danger, there have been some glaring omissions over the years, and smaller leaks can be left unattended. Customers must pay for this lost energy even though they never receive it, and the leaks are in the form of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Worse still, gas utilities aren't required to report how much gas they've lost and from what sources, and don't have to consider health and environmental impacts in deciding what they need to repair.

Rep. Sharon Shewmake's (D-Bellingham) HB 2518 will address all these shortcomings. Utilities will now annually disclose their total lost gas and the Utilities and Transportation Commission will calculate how much is lost as a result of their intentional choices to vent gas. The law will require a broader test

for leak repair, considering health and environmental impacts, and improve the standards for maintaining our gas distribution and transmission system. By increasing the number of pipelines upgraded and repaired, the policy will increase employment opportunities for the many union workers that support, maintain, and improve our extensive gas system.

■ **Climate Pollution Limits** — In 2008, our state adopted its first greenhouse gas emission limits. These were out-of-date almost as soon as that session ended. So this year Rep. Vandana Slatter (D-Bellevue) introduced new targets based on the most current available science. The new limits set an intention for Washington to cut its greenhouse gas pollution by 95% from 1990 levels by 2050, while achieving net-zero emissions at the same time through natural climate solutions so richly available in the Pacific Northwest. HB 2311 also sets a firm intention that when we begin adopting policies to realize these goals, we must also incorporate the needs and priorities of workers—incentivizing not just jobs, but good jobs; supporting workers caught in the transition; and protecting manufacturers through the clean energy transition.

But more work remains. Adopting ambitious limits means additional legislation is needed to make them real.

■ **The Clean Fuel Standard** has existed for years in California, Oregon and British Columbia, and will be adopted by all of Canada in the next several years. It requires a gradual reduction in the carbon intensity of transportation fuels—increasing access to petroleum alternatives like biofuels and electricity that we largely don't have right now.

The policy earned the support of a number of WSLC affiliated unions who see value in climate mitigation and job creation opportunities in biofuels and

## EQUITY

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■ HB 2567, sponsored by Rep. My-Linh Thai (D-Bellevue), will ensure open courts for everyone by protecting all people from warrantless civil immigration arrests at courthouses. It prohibits court staff and prosecutors from using state and local justice resources to report people for federal immigration enforcement, and requires courts to collect data on immigration agents' surveillance of courthouses in Washington. These measures will build community trust in local courts, prohibit immigration agents from interfering in local court functioning, and preserve access to our courts for all.

■ Rep. Debra Entenman (D-Kent) sponsored HB 2441 to improve access to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. It directs the Department of Social and Health Services to conduct outreach to families whose TANF benefits have terminated due to time limits and, if they appear to meet the expanded time-limit extension criteria, to help them to reapply for assistance.

■ HB 2602, sponsored by Rep. Melanie Morgan (D-Parkland), bans race-based hair discrimination. It defines race, which is a protected class, to include traits such as hair texture and "protective hairstyles" like including braids, locks, and twists.

HB 1783 creating the State Office of Equity is included in our 2020 Voting Record. It passed on party-line votes: 28-21 in the Senate (Vote #8)



Entenman



Gregerson



Morgan



Saldaña

and 57-39 in the House (Vote #12). All Democratic legislators voted "yes" and all Republican legislators voted "no."

It's disturbing to me that this noble effort to create more equity and opportunity for all Washingtonians should be a partisan issue.

The WSLC Constitution states, "We shall combat resolutely the forces that seek to undermine the democratic institutions of our nation and to enslave the human soul."

Institutional racism and systemic policies that disadvantage people of color are such forces. I pledge to you that we will continue to combat them, both inside and outside the labor movement – including in Washington state government.



Thai

electric vehicles. Other affiliates expressed concern about the potential risk the policy could pose to a future transportation revenue and investment package, which the state desperately needed even before last year's passage of I-976. Gratitude to Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon (D-West Seattle), the prime sponsor and a long-time labor and climate champion, for working for a compromise that in-

cluded postponing implementation of the clean fuel standard until after the passage of such a transportation package.

While that policy and others didn't make it across the finish line this year, Olympia's climate conversation will continue in future sessions.

*Vlad Gutman-Britten is the WSLC's Infrastructure and Climate Advisor.*

The WSLC Legislative Report is an annual publication of the  
**Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO**

321 16th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144 — 206-281-8901  
906 Columbia St SW, Olympia, WA 98501 — 360-943-0608

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## COVID-19

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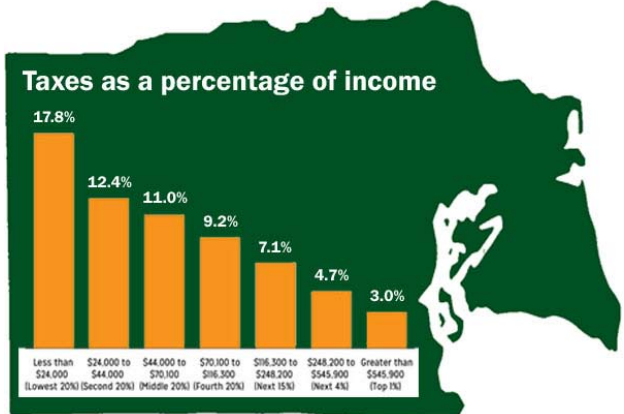
In tandem with this work on the ground, the WSLC is in conversation with affiliates, identifying policies to bring to Olympia in 2021 in support of our members and all working people in Washington.

While our state is in the enviable position of being able to tap millions in reserves for emergency funding, more resources will be needed to mitigate the worst impacts of this crisis. Hospitals and healthcare workers will need more support, and we'll need serious investments in job assistance, apprenticeship programs, and child care. We need stronger protections for workers on the job, including more avenues for holding unscrupulous and dangerous employers responsible.

Our state's backwards, regressive tax system exacerbates the issues we face in our response. State revenue is drawn heavily from sales tax, an unreliable source in a state where residents are urged to stay in their homes, and a decline in sales transactions seems certain. Reliance on sales tax revenue, already tenuous and drawn disproportionately from working people, is a significant stumbling block. This crisis lays bare the urgency of reforming our tax code.

We will need to fight for bold policy ideas that provide concrete relief to working people, not shying away from systemic changes; and we need allies to succeed.

This makes electing strong labor champions to the State Legislature even more important. We need fierce advocates to have our backs in Olympia, advocates who know the struggles of working people from personal experience. Luckily, we have no shortage of union members running for office in November 2020, many



**"This crisis lays bare the urgency of reforming our tax code."**

of whom have attended the WSLC's Path to Power candidate training program.

This crisis is reshaping many aspects of our daily lives, and will continue to do so. What we learn as we respond will form the contours of our work in Olympia in 2021. The labor movement was made for moments of crisis like this, built by working people to defend against many of the same problems so clearly illuminated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We'll continue to use that strength to fight for policies that put working people before corporate profit, reshaping our economy in response to the changes already occurring in working people's lives.

To read more about the WSLC's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, visit [wslc.org/covid19](http://wslc.org/covid19).

*Larry Brown is President and April Sims is Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO.*



# Transparency needed to address health costs

By SYBILL HYPPOLITE

If you didn't appreciate the critical importance of affordable health care before, you should now.

Long before COVID-19, working families have struggled to pay exorbitant healthcare costs. Many wait too long to seek medical treatment—or forgo it entirely—because they can't afford it. The consequences can be fatal. But in a global pandemic, such decisions can put families, co-workers, neighbors, and even entire communities at risk.

The problem: how do you address rising healthcare costs if you lack data and information about healthcare spending? It is growing faster than purchasers can sustain while policymakers and patients face a delivery system that is increasingly complex and consolidated.

HB 2036, sponsored by Rep. Nicole Macri (D-Seattle) and strongly supported by the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, would create more transpar-

## Death of SHB 2036 was far from transparent

SHB 2036, the House-approved health system transparency bill, passed the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee and was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

On March 2, the deadline for fiscal committee action, a routine voice vote was taken on SHB 2036 in Ways & Means, and the bill appeared to pass. But as always, that passage is "subject to signatures." Committee members

must sign the boards after the meeting to make those voice votes official.

Two Democratic senators, Mark Mullet of Issaquah and Kevin Van De Wege of Sequim, joined all committee Republicans in signing in as "no" votes on SHB 2036, and committee chair, Sen. Christine Rolfes (D-Bainbridge Island), did not vote. So SHB 2036 failed to advance from Ways & Means and died for the session.

ency to provide oversight and accountability for investments in health care. It would require hospitals in Washington to report annually on certain costs, expenditures and revenues, similar to the requirements of several other states. Hospitals also would have to disclose whether they have a revenue-generating relationship

with debt-collection agencies.

SHB 2036, an amended version of the bill, passed the House 56-42 (see Vote #3). It retained strong support from the WSLC and other unions, but was opposed by the Washington State Hospital Association. Ultimately, SHB 2036 failed to advance from the Senate. (See

the accompanying report for details.)

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, hospitals will surely need help to recover. They faced many unanticipated expenses and costs to fight the pandemic, and they lost revenue associated with the suspension of elective surgeries and non-emergency care. But the underlying problem will not magically go away. In fact, the need to understand hospital costs and revenues is even more important now for policymakers and the public.

To ensure patient access while addressing costs in the healthcare system, we need to understand cost drivers in the areas of largest healthcare spending: healthcare delivery. That's why the WSLC will continue to support updating Washington's oversight and transparency policies to create a sustainable healthcare system that works for us all.

*Sybill Hyppolite is the WSLC's Legislative Director.*

## Building trades win priority bills

Several significant bills supported by Washington's building and construction trades were passed into law in 2020. They include:

**BID LISTING**—Some public works contractors alter their lists of subcontractors after winning bids so they can pay lower wages and boost profits at the expense of taxpayers — and project quality.

That's why passage of ESSB 5457, sponsored by Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines), was a priority for the WSLC, the Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council, and Ironworkers Local 86. It will reduce "bid shopping" by having more subcontractors listed in bids for major public works projects. Under current law, on projects costing more than \$1 million, the prime contractor must list the subcontractors that will perform HVAC, plumbing, and electrical work. ESSB 5457 extends this requirement to subcontractors who do structural steel and rebar work. This is a common-sense policy that assures winning bidders provide decent jobs and maintain good quality on major public works projects.

ESSB 5457 passed the Senate 31-16 (see Vote #1), passed the House 97-0, and was signed into law by Gov. Jay Inslee.

**PLUMBING CODE OVERHAUL**—For years, the Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) union has worked with legislators to revise and update Washington state's plumbing code. This year, the UA made a concerted effort to include industry stakeholders in the process and come up with ways to protect consumers and honest contractors from unlicensed and unprofessional plumbers, while also bringing more young workers into the industry that desperately needs them.

SB 6170, also sponsored by Sen. Keiser, is a comprehensive overhaul of this code supported by both labor and business. It establishes clear requirements for a plumbing contractor license, creates a residential service plumbing certificate, modifies supervisory ratios of plumber trainees to certified plumbers, and expands the Advisory Board of Plumbers to regularly review these standards and make sure they work as intended. It passed both houses unanimously.

**APPRENTICESHIP COMPLIANCE**—SB 6239, sponsored by Sen. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma), strengthens apprenticeship utilization requirements on public works projects. If a bidding contractor has a history of penalties for not meeting these requirements, or is habitual in using the "good faith exemption," it must submit a plan to the state explaining how it will correct these shortcomings. SB 6239 passed the Senate 37-10 (Vote #3) and the House 60-37 (Vote #8), and was signed by Inslee.



Keiser

## WSLC Legislative Lobbying Conference



Hundreds of delegates representing unions across the state gathered in Olympia on Feb. 6 for the Washington State Labor Council's 2020 Legislative Lobbying Conference. They learned about the status of priority legislation affecting working families, rallied on the State Capitol steps in support HB 1888, and then fanned out across the campus to meet with their legislators. Here, delegates from the 30th Legislative District meet with Sen. Claire Wilson (D-Auburn) and share information on the pro-labor bills.

## PRIVACY

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At the start of the session, HB 1888 faced stiff opposition from newspapers and others. Recent controversial efforts to exempt legislators from certain aspects of public disclosure law had enraged advocates for open government. HB 1888 was portrayed as yet another attack.

The Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME 28, Washington Education Association, SEIU 925, the State Council of Firefighters, WPEA/UFCW 365 and other public employees unions led an aggressive campaign to educate and mobilize their members on the issue. In the end, legislators were bombarded by thousands of emails and phone calls, and hundreds of public employees came to Olympia in support of HB 1888. They told lawmakers that disclosure of birth dates endangers victims of domestic abuse or violent crime,

increases risk of identity theft and doxxing (where personal identifying data is maliciously posted online), and puts families' safety at risk.

"Other states have acknowledged their duty to protect public employees' birth dates," said WSLC Secretary Treasurer April Sims at a Feb. 6 rally on the Capitol steps. "Oregon and California, for example, exempt birth dates from disclosure. It's time for Washington to protect its public employees' safety and privacy as well, by passing HB 1888."

The pressure to fix the law was enormous and forced the bill's opponents to the table to negotiate a compromise. Led by Hudgins and Sen. Patty Kuderer (D-Bellevue), a compromise was reached to exempt birth dates but allow newspaper reporters legitimate access when investigating government wrongdoing. The amended bill easily passed on bipartisan votes: 91-7 in the House (see Vote #2) and 36-10 in the Senate (Vote #5). Gov. Jay Inslee then signed it into law.



Hudgins



Kuderer



The good, bad and ugly bill sponsorships

Lots of bills that would have serious benefits or consequences for Washington’s working families never get a full House or Senate vote. But you can tell who supports the good, bad and ugly bills by checking the list of sponsors and committee votes:



■ HB 1965 — **WORKER PROTECTION ACT** — This WSLC priority legislation failed to get a vote in the House. It would provide an avenue for whistleblowers to enforce labor laws on behalf of the state and hold employers accountable when state agencies cannot comprehensively address wage, discrimination, equal pay, and health and safety laws.



**Hansen**  
Ormsby, Sherry Appleton, Joe Fitzgibbon, Lillian Ortiz-Self, Gerry Pollet

■ SB 6393 and HB 2361 — **CANNABIS WORKERS’ RIGHTS** — With the rapid expansion of Washington’s cannabis industry, the WSLC led by UFCW 21 supported this legislation to require that cannabis companies commit to safety, equity, and workers’ rights on the job.



Conway



Peterson

SPONSORS: Sen. Steve Conway (D-Tacoma) and Rep. Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. Rebecca Saldaña, Karen Keiser, Bob Hasegawa, Kevin Van De Wege, Claire Wilson, Joe Nguyen; and Rep. Appleton

■ SB 6253 — **COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION** — This bill would establish comprehensive reforms to Washington’s early childhood education system to ensured that early learners get the assistance and support they need to avoid falling behind their peers as they begin kindergarten.



Wilson

Das, Joe Nguyen, Jeannie Darneille, Sam Hunt

■ HB 2511 — **DOMESTIC WORKERS BILL OF RIGHTS** — This would have protected nannies, housekeepers, cooks, gardeners and

SENATE

●—"Right" vote ○—"Wrong" vote E—Excused (Democrats listed in bold.)

1 ESB 5457 (Keiser)—**Bid Listing**—Extending prime contractors’ requirement to list subcontractors of public works project bids to include structural steel and rebar work. Right vote: YES (Passed 31-16 on Jan. 24.)

2 SB 6217 (Keiser)—**Airport labor standards**—Closing a loophole denying certain airport employees, including airline catering workers, access to SeaTac’s minimum wage standard. Right vote: YES (Passed 33-15 on Feb. 17.)

3 ESB 6239 (Conway)—Public works **apprenticeship compliance**. Right vote: YES (Passed 37-10 on Feb. 18.)

4 SB 6261 (McCoy)—**Farm labor contract system** reforms. Right vote: YES (Passed 32-16 on Feb. 18.)

5 HB 1888 (Hudgins)—**Protecting public employee safety and privacy** regarding birthdates. Right vote: YES (Passed 36-10 on Mar. 4.)

6 HB 2017 (Frame)—**Administrative law judge collective bargaining**. Right vote: YES (Passed 29-18 Mar. 4.)

7 HB 1521 (Dolan)—**Government contracting accountability and transparency**—Requiring cost-benefit analyses before contracting out the work of state employees. Right vote: YES (Passed 31-18 Mar. 5.)

8 HB 1783 (Gregerson)—Creating a **Washington State Office of Equity** to promote access to equitable opportunities. Right vote: YES (Passed 28-21 on Mar. 5.)

9 HB 2308 (Slatter)—Requiring **job title reporting** to help track educational and certification workforce placements. Right vote: YES (Passed 34-14 on Mar. 5.)

10 HB 1590 (Doglio)—Allowing local sales and use tax for **affordable housing**. Right vote: YES (Passed 27-21 on Mar. 6.)

11 SB 6534 (Cleveland)—Creating an **ambulance transport quality assurance** fee. Right vote: YES (Passed 44-4 on Mar. 12.)

Senator	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2020 %	LIFE-TIME
Becker	2	○	○	○	○	E	E	○	○	○	○	●	11	14
Billig	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Braun	20	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	45	20
Brown	8	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	18	15
Carlyle	36	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	82	82
Cleveland	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97
Conway	29	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Darneille	27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	93
Das	47	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Dhingra	45	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Ericksen	42	○	○	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	E	●	11	15
Fortunato	31	○	E	E	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	13	31
Frockt	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	95
Hasegawa	11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Hawkins	12	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	45	27
Hobbs	44	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	91	72
Holy	6	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	36	22
Honeyford	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	9	8
Hunt	22	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	98
Keiser	33	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	96
King	14	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	64	27
Kuderer	48	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Liias	21	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	96
Lovelett	40	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100

Senator	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2020 %	LIFE-TIME
McCoy	38	E	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	90	95
Mullet	5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	73	76
Muzzall	10	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	36	36
Nguyen	34	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
O'Ban	28	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	64	36
Padden	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	9	9
Pedersen	43	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	87
Randall	26	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	91	97
Rivers	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	45	22
Rolfes	23	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	94
Saldaña	37	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Salomon	32	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Schoesler	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	9	12
Sheldon	35	○	○	○	○	E	E	○	○	○	○	●	56	29
Short	7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	18	12
Stanford	1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Takko	19	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	83
Van De Wege	24	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	91
Wagoner	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	9	12
Walsh	16	E	○	○	○	E	○	○	○	E	○	E	29	33
Warnick	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	9	16
Wellman	41	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97
Wilson, C.	30	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Wilson, L.	17	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	9	15
Zeiger	25	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	55	42

other workers from sexual harassment and discrimination and retaliation. It passed the House 59-39 but did not get a vote in the Senate.



Stonier

Bergquist, Lauren Davis, Beth Doglio, Noel Frame, Alex Ramel, Gerry Pollet, Nicole Macri, Roger Goodman, Marcus Riccelli, June Robinson



■ HB 2404 — **LOWER WAGES IN RURAL COUNTIES** — This bill would have “adjusted downward” wage standards, including the minimum wage, in every county outside of King County.

SPONSORS: Rep. Jeremie Dufault (R-Selah)

CO-SPONSORS: Reps. Hoff, Van Werven, Corry

■ SB 6372 — **WORKERS’ COMPROMISE AND RELEASE** — This bill would have expanded so-called “structured settlements,” also known as compromise and release, in the workers’ compensation system. Injured workers, who are often in desperate financial circumstances, would be offered lump-sum buyouts that are less than they would otherwise receive to close their claims.

SPONSOR: Sen. Curtis King (R-Yakima)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. Braun, Schoesler

■ SB 5556 and SB 5934 — **LOWER PREVAILING WAGES** — Both bills would have exempted certain public construction projects from prevailing wage standards.

SPONSORS: Sen. Doug Ericksen (R-Bellingham)

CO-SPONSORS: None

■ HB 2788 — **FUNDING PRIVATE CHARTER SCHOOLS** — This bill would have diverted taxpayer funding for public schools into private charter schools, which lack public accountability and other basic safeguards. Charter schools are exempt from open meetings and public records laws, certain labor and health-and-safety laws, and staff qualification requirements at public schools.

SPONSORS: Rep. Eric Pettigrew (D-Seattle)

CO-SPONSORS: Reps. Stokesbary, Springer, Steele, Walen, Harris, Sullivan, Rude, Dolan, Lekanoff



■ HB 2025 — **WORKERS’ COMP PRIVATIZATION** — Creating a task force to study privatization of our state-run workers’ compensation system, an idea that Washington voters have overwhelmingly rejected as harmful to the interests of injured workers.

SPONSORS: Rep. Chris Corry (R-Yakima)

CO-SPONSORS: Reps. Orcutt, Klippert, Vick, Gildon, Dent, Griffey, McCaslin, Graham, Eslick, Chambers, Smith, Jenkin, Van Werven, Goehner

■ HB 1845 — **JANUS II: DUES REAUTHORIZATION** — Creating major new hurdles for union membership among public employees, including requiring that these workers reauthorize their membership every two years.

SPONSORS: Rep. Drew Stokesbary (R-Auburn)

CO-SPONSORS: None



HOUSE

- 1 HB 2017 (Frame)—**Administrative law judge collective bargaining.** Right vote: YES (Passed 57-40, Feb. 13.)
- 2 HB 1888 (Hudgins)—**Protecting public employee safety and privacy** regarding birthdates. Right vote: YES (Passed 91-7, Feb. 14.)
- 3 HB 2036 (Macri)—Promoting **health system transparency and accountability** through better hospital revenue and expenditure reporting. Right vote: YES (Passed 56-42, Feb. 17.)
- 4 HB 2308 (Slatter)—Requiring **job title reporting** to help track educational and certification workforce placements. Right vote: YES (Passed 60-38, Feb. 17.)

●—"Right" vote ○—"Wrong" vote E—Excused (Democrats listed in **bold**.)

- 5 HB 2409 (Kilduff)—Workers' compensation **third-party administrator reform.** Right vote: YES (Passed 52-44, Feb. 18.)
- 6 HB 1590 (Doglio)—Allowing local sales and use tax for **affordable housing.** Right vote: YES (Passed 52-46, Feb. 19.)
- 7 SB 6261 (McCoy)—**Farm labor contract system** reforms. Right vote: YES (Passed 57-39, Mar. 3.)
- 8 ESB 6239 (Conway)—Public works **apprenticeship compliance.** Right vote: YES (Passed 60-37, Mar. 4.)
- 9 SB 6217 (Keiser)—**Airport labor standards**—Closing a loophole denying certain airport employees, including airline catering workers, access to SeaTac's minimum wage standard. Right vote: YES (Passed 58-39, Mar. 4.)
- 10 ESB 5457 (Keiser)—**Bid Listing**—Extending the requirement that prime contractors list subcontractors of public works project bids to include structural steel and rebar work. Right vote: YES (Passed 97-0, Mar. 5.)
- 11 HB 1521 (Dolan)—**Government contracting accountability and transparency**—Requiring cost-benefit analyses before contracting out the work of state employees. Right vote: YES (Passed 67-29, Mar. 9.)
- 12 HB 1783 (Gregerson)—Creating the **Washington State Office of Equity** to promote access to equitable opportunities for all Washingtonians. Right vote: YES (Passed 57-39, Mar. 9.)

The most important election...

By CHERIKA CARTER

It seems like every two years somebody's trying to tell us, "This is the most important election of our lives." Well... THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION OF OUR LIVES!

Many of us are focused in 2020 on the dire consequences for working families if Donald Trump is re-elected. But one big lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is that who runs state government can have a far more direct impact on your job, your family, and your life. It's not an exaggeration to say that, given another crisis like this, the difference between having Jay Inslee as your governor versus... the alternative... could literally be the difference between life and death.

As we face the economic and public health challenges that COVID-19 leaves in its wake, who we elect to statewide offices and to the Legislature will be of critical importance. We need to make sure that the people making decisions about addressing state revenue shortfalls and maintaining critical public services will not place the burden on working people. And that's why we need to work harder than ever to ensure that champions of working families get elected.

We are fortunate in Washington state to have many champions who are incumbents. They need our support. We are also fortunate to have a slate of union members—many of whom participated in the WSLC's Path to Power candidate training—who are running for the Legislature, because they share our values.



Labor Neighbor, the WSLC's grassroots member-to-member political education program, is a national model for how to engage rank-and-file union members about the importance of supporting pro-worker candidates.

Once again, we will be leafletting, calling and mailing union families across the state. We will be in their neighborhoods, reaching out to have the one-on-one conversations that are most effective way to convey this information. There's a good chance we'll be wearing masks when we do Labor Neighbor walks. But that's OK because we will be the superheroes of the 2020 elections.

So when you get that call from me to get involved in Labor Neighbor—and you will—I hope you'll remember that this is about far more than sacrificing a few evenings on the phones or a few Saturdays on neighborhood walks. This is about protecting our jobs, our families, and our quality of life in this state.

I'll talk to you soon.

*Cherika Carter is the WSLC's Political and Strategic Campaigns Director.*

Representative	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	2020 %	LIFE-TIME
Appleton	23	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Barkis	2	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	18
Bergquist	11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Blake	19	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●	●	●	92	92
Boehnke	8	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	19
Caldier	26	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	28
Callan	5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	94
Chambers	25	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	22
Chandler	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	12
Chapman	24	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	93
Chopp	43	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	92
Cody	34	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	96
Corry	14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	8	16
Davis	32	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
DeBolt	20	○	●	○	○	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	18	14
Dent	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	8	10
Doglio	22	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Dolan	22	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Duerr	1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Dufault	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	8	6
Dye	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	8	11
Entenman	47	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Eslick	39	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	21
Fey	27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Fitzgibbon	34	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Frame	36	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Gildon	25	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	22
Goehner	12	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	33	19
Goodman	45	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	98
Graham	6	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	29
Gregerson	33	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Griffey	35	○	●	○	○	○	E	○	○	○	○	E	E	33	27
Hansen	23	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Harris	17	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	42	24
Hoff	18	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	13
Hudgins	11	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97
Irwin	31	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	27	36
Jenkin	16	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	15
Jenkins	27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	94
Johnson	30	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	92	92
Kilduff	28	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Kirby	29	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Klippert	8	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	11
Kloba	1	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Kraft	17	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	15
Kretz	7	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	14
Leavitt	28	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	83	84
Lekanoff	40	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Lovick	44	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97

Representative	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	2020 %	LIFE-TIME
MacEwan	35	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	33	26
Macri	43	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Maycumber	7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	18
McCaslin	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	11
Mead	44	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	E	E	E	○	○	89	89
Morgan	29	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Mosbrucker	14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	24
Orcutt	20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	15
Ormsby	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Ortiz-Self	21	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Orwall	33	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97
Paul	10	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	92	93
Pellicciotti	30	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Peterson	21	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Pettigrew	37	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	92
Pollet	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Ramel	40	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Ramos	5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	94
Riccelli	3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Robinson	38	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Rude	16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	31
Ryu	32	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Santos	37	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	96
Schmick	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	13
Sells	38	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Senn	41	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	99
Shea	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	12
Shewmake	42	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	92	87
Slatter	48	●	●	●	●	E	○	E	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
Smith	10	○	○	○	○	E	○	E	○	○	○	○	○	20	22
Springer	45	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	92	83
Steele	12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	26
Stokesbary	31	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	8	25
Stonier	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97
Sullivan	47	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	91
Sutherland	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	8	13
Tarleton	36	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Thai	41	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	97
Tharinger	24	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	95
Valdez	46	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	100
Van Werven	42	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	16
Vick	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	11
Volz	6	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	E	E	30	28
Walen	48	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	92	91
Walsh	16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	33	29
Wilcox	2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	17
Wyllie	49	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	100	95
Ybarra	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	17	22
Young	26	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	25



# Administrative Law Judges win right to join together

If you disagree with a government action, you have the right to appeal that decision with the state's Office of Administrative Hearings. Most of these appeals relate to unemployment benefits, child support decisions and Medicaid coverage, but the OAH hears appeals for most state agencies and even some local governments.

Those appeals are heard by more than 110 Administrative Law Judges, who specialize in certain areas of expertise. These folks have big caseloads, hear more than 50,000 cases each year, and do the same work as administrative adjudicators within other agencies. The difference is that they have no collective bargaining rights, and the lack of wage predictability and security has led to recruitment and retention challenges.

HB 1017, sponsored by Rep. Noel Frame (D-Seattle), would resolve this inequity and grant ALJs collective bargaining rights. Unfortunately these days, allowing any workers to come together to form a union is a partisan issue. But thanks to strong advocacy from the Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME Council 28 and Democratic control of the Legislature, HB 1017 passed the House 57-40 (Vote #1), the Senate 29-18 (Vote #6), and was signed by Gov. Jay Inslee.



**Frame**

## Promoting affordable housing

Housing affordability is a statewide crisis for workers in urban and rural communities, and for first-time buyers and renters alike. The WSLC supports strategies to increase housing stock, to adopt smart land-use standards to promote housing options, and to support tenants burdened by extreme rental costs.

HB 1590, sponsored by Rep. Beth Doglio (D-Olympia), allows a local sales and use tax for affordable housing to be established by a councilmanic authority. It passed the House 52-46 (Vote #6),



**Doglio**



*Rep. Timm Ormsby (D-Spokane) complained that, since becoming a state legislator in 2003, his photo has NEVER appeared in the WSLC Legislative Report. So here he is (the guy with the tie) meeting with constituents from the 3rd Legislative District who attended the WSLC Legislative and Lobbying Conference. And below is the contingent from the 27th Legislative District.*

passed the Senate 27-21 (Vote #10), and was signed by Inslee.

## Improving education, training

HB 2308, sponsored by Rep. Vandana Slatter (D-Kirkland), adds the reporting of occupational classifications or job titles to employers' quarterly Employment Security reports. This information will be kept confidential, but will help track educational and certification workforce placements and provide better information to workers and students making decisions about education and training.



**Slatter**

## Banning use of private prisons

SB 6442, sponsored by Sen. Rebecca Saldaña (D-Seattle), prohibits the state from sending people to for-profit prisons outside the state. It includes some exceptions for involuntary placement in mental health, substance use rehab, and similar services. Supported by the WSLC and multiple community groups, it passed the House 64-33, the Senate 29-20, and was signed by Inslee.



**Saldaña**

## Benefits for caregivers

Job search requirements for unemployed workers who care for loved ones



often require those workers to take jobs that do not allow them to provide care. SB 5473, sponsored by Sen. Rebecca Saldaña (D-Seattle), set out to update these standards so workers are not forced to choose between an uncommon shift and caring for their family. SB 5473 was amended to study the economic impacts of granting unemployment benefits to caregivers for certain voluntary quits and passed the Senate 40-6. It passed the House 57-40.

## Quality ambulance services

SB 6534, sponsored by Sen. Annette Cleveland (D-Vancouver), creates an ambulance transport quality assurance fee for Medicaid-funded emergency am-

bulance transports by private providers. Supported by the Teamsters union, AMR Emergency Medical Technicians, and the Washington Ambulance Association, this will help promote quality services and boost wages at those ambulance companies. It passed the House 87-10 and the Senate 44-4 (Vote #11).

## 3% increase for PERS 1, TRS 1

HB 1390, sponsored by Rep. Mari Leavitt (D-University Place), grants a one-time 3 percent increase to the retirement benefits of PERS 1 and TRS 1 retirees. This one-time cost-of-living increase is desperately needed and helps offset the rising costs of retiree health benefits. It passed both houses unanimously.

# Progress for H-2A farmworkers, but much more is needed

Much of Washington's essential agricultural workforce is recruited using international labor contracting systems and the federal H-2A temporary visa program. But when our state's laws governing farm labor contracting were written in the 1950s, and last revised in 1985, the H-2A program did not even exist.

Since that time, Washington has experienced many instances of abuse and exploitation of H-2A workers brought to the U.S. under false pretenses and then threatened with deportation if they complained. Under current law, it's too easy for H-2A workers who speak up about unpaid wages or unsafe working conditions to be disciplined, fired, or blacklisted.

For several years, farmworker advocates

have sought to update these contracting laws to prevent such exploitation. But agriculture industry opposition has stifled those efforts.

As originally written, SB 6261 sponsored by Sen. John McCoy (D-Tulalip), proposed a number of reforms that would protect these workers. It established farm labor contractor licenses requiring surety bond and insurance coverage, created joint liability for unlicensed contractors and farmers who knowingly hire them, and ended a loophole whereby existing regulations do not apply to contrac-



**McCoy**

tors classified as nonprofit organizations. Importantly, it also prohibited retaliation against H-2A workers who file complaints, testify in such proceedings, or consult with farmworkers advocates regarding their rights.

But once again, it faced aggressive opposition from agricultural interests and was scaled back to remove the licensing, joint liability and retaliation language. As amended, it simply closed the non-profit loophole.

Even that small but important change required strong support from Familias Unidas por la Justicia and Columbia Legal Services to get passed. In the end, SB 6261 passed the Senate 32-16 (Vote #4) and the House 57-39 (Vote #7). So progress was achieved, but much more remains to be done.



# Transportation system needs cash infusion

By VLAD GUTMAN-BRITTEN

Our state's transportation system is in serious need of investment. The reasons are many, but to highlight a few:

- WSDOT estimates that it receives less than half of \$1.24 billion it needs to maintain the roads, ferries and other resources under its jurisdiction.

- The U.S. Supreme Court's culvert decision gives the state 10 years to invest approximately \$3 billion in fish passage improvements to honor treaties with tribal nations to restore historic fish runs.

- We are years behind on several major road projects, including the I-5 bridge over the Columbia River. The oldest part of the bridge dates to 1917 and must be replaced for safety reasons, and the new bridge should include expanded transit capacity. Other major projects abound, including replacing the US-2 trestle.

- Our state has woefully underfunded transit investments, a situation exacerbated by last year's passage of I-976, which will cut \$2 billion over six years from a number of transportation accounts, especially the multimodal account. Our underinvestment increases congestion and greenhouse gas pollution, and because

## From bad to worse...

Due to the necessary restrictions in place to "flatten the curve" of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, Washington's transportation programs are facing losses of up to \$100 million

transportation costs are a larger share of low-income households' spending, it disproportionately hurts those among us least able to bear the costs. It costs on average nearly \$10,000 to own and operate a car every year. Helping folks who want to opt out of these costs and choose lower-cost transit is a profound economic justice issue.

The Legislature finished the session without making substantial cuts to transit or highway construction projects, but legislators warned this would only be possible once. Without a new revenue package next year, we will experience deep cuts in existing programs and investments that are already underfunded.

Sen. Steve Hobbs (D-Lake Stevens), the Senate's Transportation Committee

a month, a 38 percent shortfall from anticipated revenue levels.

State Transportation Secretary Roger Millar warned in late April that this will affect construction and maintenance of highways, rail, traffic control and other projects.

chair, and Rep. Jake Fey (D-Tacoma), his House counterpart, have indicated that they will spend interim working with stakeholders and others to begin developing new funding frameworks to fill the state's needs. Others, including that committee's vice chair Sen. Rebecca Saldana (D-Seattle), have also begun sharing early thinking for how a progressive and equitable package can be structured. At the same time, the Joint Transportation Committee is tasked with identifying a range of potential revenue sources for consideration by legislators. All told, legislators are considering spending at least \$15 billion over the next decade or more revitalizing and expanding our transportation system to meet the needs of a growing population and a dynamic

economy.

Any proposal that moves forward will include a state gas tax increase. Sen. Hobbs' Forward Washington proposal includes an increase of 6 cents per gallon. But this year, for a substantial share of their new revenue, Senate proposals relied on different forms of carbon pricing, imposing a new charge based on the carbon content of fossil fuels when they are used. Under consideration are carbon taxes, where a fixed rate is assigned for emitted carbon; a cap-and-trade system, where regulated parties like oil refiners and fuel importers acquire pollution allowances at auction; and an air quality surcharge, a one-time charge on the purchase of a new car based on its projected lifetime greenhouse gas emissions.

Transportation packages don't happen often. If we construct them correctly they will support thousands of construction jobs, expand mobility and access for everyone (not just drivers), connect our economy to the world, and support the healthy environment we want for ourselves and our children. It's a significant undertaking, but Washington needs the Legislature to complete it next session.

## Strengthening the safety net for injured workers, families

The original grand compromise of the workers' compensation system was that injured workers would give up their ability to sue their employers in exchange for "sure and certain relief" via this safety net program. It was never intended to become the adversarial system it has become. Too often, employers have created cumbersome administrative hurdles for injured workers to get their benefits.

Two bills passed in 2020 to ensure the intent of that original grand compromise is honored.

- In our workers' compensation system, Third Party Administrators provide administrative services and case management expertise to employers large enough to be self-insured and to Retrospective Rating program participants. Well, that's what they're supposed to do.

Unfortunately, TPAs are also often used to suppress workers' compensation claims and undermine the ability of injured workers to get the wage replacement and the medical benefits they are due.

HB 2409, sponsored by Rep. Christine Kilduff (D-University Place), will increase penalties for employer misconduct in workers' compensation and specify their responsibility of fair conduct. It passed the House 52-44 (Vote #5), the Senate 39-9, and was signed by Gov. Jay Inslee.

- Employers and the state Department of Labor and Industries often require unnecessary and invasive Independent Medical Exams for injured workers trying to heal and return to work. Legislators have heard testimony about workers who, having already met with multiple doctors to diagnose and recommend treatment for a work-related injury, are then forced again and again to return for IMEs, postponing the claim's allowance and delaying medical treatment.

## Still trying to ignore voters and privatize

Ten years ago, the Building Industry Association of Washington—then led by Tom McCabe, the current boss of the anti-union Freedom Foundation—bankrolled Initiative 1082, an attempt to privatize Washington's state-run workers' compensation system. Despite spending millions on misleading ads in support of I-1082, Washington voters overwhelmingly rejected it by an 18-point margin. It failed in every county in the state — east and west of the mountains.

This year, first-term Rep. Chris Corry (R-Yakima) resurrected this bad idea by introducing HB 2025. This bill would have created a new task force to study privatization of our workers' compensation system. The bill didn't even get a hearing and rightfully so. But a shocking 15 Republican state representatives thought it was a good idea to co-sponsor Corry's bill.

See the list of co-sponsors on the Page 4 feature, "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly." That's where we list the co-sponsors of legislation that didn't get a vote. HB 2025 ranked among the "ugly."

SB 6440, sponsored by Sen. Derek Stanford (D-Bothell), would limit how often IMEs can be requested when other sufficient medical information is available. It was amended to create a work group to make recommendations for reforming the IME system. That amended version passed the Senate 45-2, and it passed the House 97-0.



WSLC President Larry Brown testifies about tax break accountability.

## No tax break 'snapbacks' without accountability

This year, a big corporation came to Olympia and asked legislators to take away a major tax break that saves it millions of dollars each year.

No, really. This happened.

Boeing asked legislators to end the state's aerospace manufacturers' tax incentive in order to resolve a World Trade Organization dispute and avoid harmful retaliatory trade tariffs.

Organized labor supported this idea, but took issue with a key component of HB 2945 / SB 6690. The legislation included a "snapback" provision that would allow the state, without the Legislature's authorization, to automatically reinstate the tax preferences if the WTO dispute is resolved and allows the incentives to remain in place.

Larry Brown, President of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, joined IAM District 751 President Jon Holden and SPEEA Legislative Director Brandon Anderson in testifying against such a snapback with no strings attached. The union leaders said Boeing's decisions in recent years to expand manufacturing facilities and

create jobs in South Carolina and other countries while reducing its workforce in Washington, despite receiving the extraordinary tax breaks from our state, indicate the need for strong and specific accountability language to any snapback provision for the tax breaks.

"While we still believe in tax incentives to grow and maintain good jobs, we believe the history tells us that the aerospace industry will act in its own self-interest and the state should consider doing the same," Brown told the House Finance Committee.

Legislators ended up passing a version of SB 6690 that makes any future snapback to the lower preferential tax rates conditional on Boeing and its suppliers meeting new apprenticeship requirements. Although labor leaders had sought to make the tax breaks' reinstatement conditional on Boeing building its next new aircraft in-state, this new commitment to training the next generation of the industry's workers is a positive development for Washington state and its world-class aerospace workforce.



Kilduff



# WSLC's agenda in Olympia is all about worker solidarity

The labor movement in Washington state is strong and growing in numbers. With the third highest union density in the United States, working people are organized all over Washington, across economic sector, region, ethnicity, and political affiliation. Advancing policies that benefit all workers in Washington, the WSLC's legislative agenda represents the diversity of the labor movement in the priorities we set.

There can be a tendency to narrow our focus to the differences among the 550,000 working people we represent at the WSLC, familiar dichotomies for many of us: east vs. west; rural vs. urban; blue collar vs. white collar. And while our differences can be important – our environments shape us in many ways – there is far more that unites us than divides us. All of us deserve safe workplaces, decent

pay, respect on the job, access to legal remedies when our rights are denied, quality schooling for our kids, and affordable housing for our families. Our legislative agenda was built from these shared needs.



Secretary  
Treasurer's Column  
**April Sims**

SB 6217, sponsored by Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines), addressed a fundamental labor priority: providing wage-parity for employees previously exempted from minimum-wage ordinances.

HB 1841 by Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D-Spokane) established minimum railroad crew sizes, legislation that labor has pushed for several sessions. With more than 1 million pounds of oil transported by rail each week across Washington, and longer and more unwieldy trains carrying it, establishing minimum safe crew sizes is essential for protecting the wellbeing of working people, our communities, and our natural resources.

Serving the needs of all working people also requires us to fight for policies that disproportionately impact some of us. We know that discrimination and mistreatment is often meted out to vulnerable workers first to test how far standards can be pushed for all working people, continuing to maintain the harmful systemic inequities that hold back all workers.

We were proud to support several key pieces of legislation addressing gaps in legal protection for working people. Rep. My-Linh Thai (D-Bellevue) sponsored HB 2567 to promote open courts, ensure citizenship status is not a deterrent for exercising legal rights, and establish court processes for folks whose legal rights are violated due to their status. HB 2602 from Rep. Melanie Morgan (D-Parkland) bans hair discrimination, ensuring all Washingtonians can go about their lives without restrictions on the natural way their hair grows out of their head,

a freedom many of us take for granted.

We have more work to do in 2021 to build on these gains for working people. SB 6253 by Sen. Claire Wilson (D-Auburn) to create comprehensive early childhood education fell short this year. Likewise, the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights – HB 2511 by Rep. Monica Stonier (D-Vancouver) – would have established necessary protections, legal remedies, and workplace rights for domestic workers. And the Worker Protection Act, HB 1965 by Rep. Drew Hansen (D-Bainbridge Is.), would have established avenues for whistleblowers to hold employers accountable. We'll continue to fight for these essential policies during the longer 2021 session.

At the heart of our work as a labor organization is the ethos of solidarity; the struggle of one of our union siblings is our collective struggle as a movement. As our movement continues to grow in strength and diversity, that ideal remains our guide.

## OVERVIEW

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win with the passage of SB 6217, sponsored by Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines). This closes a loophole denying certain airport employees, including airline catering workers, access to City of SeaTac's historic Prop 1 minimum wage standard. Passed in the first session it was introduced – a rarity in Olympia – thousands of lower wage workers who support our bustling airport secure the promise of more livable wages. Rep. Mia Gregerson (D-SeaTac) sponsored the House version off this bill.

### State contracting accountability

An eight year effort to promote transparency and accountability in government contracting concluded when HB 1521, sponsored by Rep. Laurie Dolan (D-Olympia), received a concurrence vote by the House on March 11. By requiring a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis before contracting out state-employee work and holding private contractors accountable for their performance, Washington's residents and taxpayers will get a higher value for their dollar while protecting good public-sector union jobs. Organizing work by the Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME Council 28 and the Washington Public Employees Association/UFCW 365, plus a boost from the Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council, lead to passage of this landmark piece of legislation.

### Big wins for building trades

Speaking of the building trades, it was a good year to be represented by unions in construction. Two years of diligent work by the Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) lead to the passage of a major overhaul of our plumbing code with Sen. Keiser's SB 6170. And not to be outdone by herself, Keiser's bid-listing bill, SB 5457, a major priority for Ironworkers Local 86, also made it to the governor's desk for signature. This legislation will extend the requirement for prime contractors to list their subcontractors of public works project bids to structural steel and rebar work, ending the practice of bid-shopping



UNITE HERE Local 8 members led the charge to pass SB 6217, allowing the Port of Seattle to raise wages for airline catering workers at Sea-Tac Airport, so they are covered by the City of SeaTac's \$16.34 minimum wage standard.

for this work. A proven concept for electrical, plumbing, and HVAC work, the extension of this practice will protect high-road subcontractors from unscrupulous primes seeking to pad their profits at the public's – and workers' – expense.

### Some missed opportunities

Unfortunately, there were several missed opportunities during the session that will require more legislative attention and aggressive organizing in 2021. WSLC priority legislation dubbed the Worker Protection Act, HB 1965 sponsored by Rep. Drew Hansen (D-Bainbridge Is.) failed to move out of the House. This would provide an avenue for whistleblowers to enforce labor laws on behalf of the state when agencies are unable to comprehensively address wage,

discrimination, equal pay, and health and safety laws.

With the rapid expansion of Washington's cannabis industry, UFCW 21 supported several concepts meant to promote safety, wage stability, health care, and professionalization of the workplace in the form of HB 2361 (Rep. Strom Peterson) and SB 6393 (Sen. Steve Conaway). Unfortunately, only the Senate bill advanced from policy committee, and it failed to receive a vote in the Ways and Means Committee.

While the Legislature did vote to pass Rep. Beth Doglio's HB 1590 to authorize local sales taxes for affordable housing investments, it failed to move on an odd-fellows effort by Reps. Nicole Macri and Larry Springer, HBs 2907 and 2948, that would have raised revenue in

a much more progressive way by imposing a modest excise tax on large employers' payroll in King County. By raising millions of dollars per year for investment in housing, behavioral health, and homelessness diversion programs, the Legislature would have equipped King County with a powerful tool to address homelessness and housing. Unfortunately, a deal didn't come together in the confines of the 60-day session.

### Coronavirus response

While *sine die* was a muted affair, the Legislature did end on something of a positive note by passing HB 2965, sponsored by Rep. Eileen Cody (D-Seattle) unanimously from both houses. This early response to the coronavirus outbreak appropriated \$200 million, mostly from the Budget Stabilization Account, to equip the state with resources to respond to the pandemic. An additional \$25 million buoyed the Unemployment Account to help stabilize costs borne by employers. Further, it authorized the State Board of Education to issue graduation requirement waivers to school districts whose high school seniors might not be able to finish their requirements in time.

### 2021 session will be rough

There is no other way to put it. The 2021 session is going to be rough. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our healthcare systems are deeply stressed and will require a significant injection of resources. Our workforce will be reeling from mass layoffs. All the while, our upside-down and backward system of revenue, that relies heavily on taxing the poorest among us through consumer spending, will not equip us with the tools to respond. We do not yet know what the total impact of this will be on our economy, but we do know that we must dig deep, and show up, and demand that our leaders respond not by axing budgets and cutting programs like they did during the Great Recession.

Rather, we must examine the systems that create economic suffering, that plunge sick people in to medical debt, and that keep job-seekers unemployed. Investments in public health and health care, infrastructure and child care, and direct support to working families to drive demand for goods and services are the strategies that will pull us all up.